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M E M O R A N D U M

**TO: Director Mark Barbash
FROM: Mayor Michael B. Coleman
SUBJECT: Assuring A Vibrant 21st Century City
DATE: 11/18/03**

To assure that Columbus is a vibrant, 21st Century City, our City must foster dynamic job growth, develop safe, sustainable neighborhoods, and establish stronger cooperation throughout Central Ohio.

Columbus' growth decisions in the 1950's and 1960's served our City well and resulted in a marked expansion of our City's economy and boundaries. Through these policies, Columbus has grown strong with dramatic increases in our population, job and business growth, and significant growth in municipal revenues.

Today, our challenge is to ensure that future generations will continue to benefit from our growth policies. This requires our Administration to conduct a thoughtful evaluation of our City's growth policies and adapt them, as appropriate, to meet challenges of this new century.

The ongoing recession sends a clear message. To assure a vibrant City, we must generate sufficient job growth, make sure new neighborhoods are safe, sustainable and livable, and that our public education system keeps pace with development.

Clearly, the time to act is now. Growth projections make it an imperative for Columbus to adopt policies to set the stage for this sustainable growth. By 2030, the population of Central Ohio is projected to grow by nearly 600,000, bringing the region's population to more than 2 million residents. Nearly half of these residents will live in Columbus. As such, we must prepare our City and region to create jobs and provide for sustainable growth; address transportation, schools, infrastructure, healthcare, recreation, and municipal service issues; and protect our drinking water and natural resources.

Growth with a Plan

To assure a vibrant City, Columbus must focus on sustainable growth. This means we need to focus on **both** job growth and healthy neighborhood development. Job growth will help us sustain our economy, promote homeownership, and finance essential neighborhood services. Healthy neighborhood development will assure that new neighborhoods will better support themselves and contribute to the community as a whole.

To get there, we need to take three steps. First, we need to prioritize development in our inward and outward growth areas to assure balanced growth. Second, we must identify the costs of development in these areas and determine a fair way to share these costs between the public and private sectors. Finally, we must heighten our engagement with suburban municipalities, surrounding counties, and the private sectors to address these growth issues and align City government's policies and budgets to help assure economic prosperity for the City and the region.

(1) Prioritizing Development in our Growth Areas

Our City's outer edges, like Polaris, Rickenbacker, and our northeast, southeast, western and northwest corridors, are experiencing dramatic growth. While we continue to see great growth potential in these areas, for the first time in our City's history, we are seeing tremendous "inward" growth in the older areas of our City. We are creating a new job and housing market in and near our downtown. The Easton area is experiencing great commercial and housing growth. With the completion of the floodwall, Franklinton and our Westside are poised for growth. The near east side is positioned for both rehabilitation and residential growth with The Taylor Avenue development and the King-Lincoln Vision Plan. The Greater Linden neighborhood is transforming as a result of the Four Corners Project. West Edge is bringing a thousand jobs to the west side of Columbus. New Housing and housing rehabilitation is sprouting up on the Southside. Finally, our investments in neighborhoods like Northland and our neighborhood investment districts are bringing new investments back to sustain the economic health of older neighborhoods.

Now the City needs to look at each of these inward and outward growth areas and assure that we have plans in place to encourage sustainable growth. Job growth and healthy neighborhoods are interdependent. Some types of jobs are appropriate in and near our neighborhoods while others are more appropriate in commercial, retail, and industrial districts. Either way, our citizens need good jobs to help sustain good neighborhoods. Without such plans, the City runs the risk of rapid housing development in our outer growth areas to help support job growth in neighboring municipalities, stretching our city services and public school services further and further out without the accompanying job growth to sustain such development. Without sufficient job growth, we run the risk of diminished revenues and reduced ability to serve our citizens.

Action Step: Prioritize development in our inward and outward growth areas and formulate development plans that promote the appropriate balance in job growth and healthy neighborhood development.

(2) Understanding and Sharing the Costs of Development

The cost of infrastructure investment and city services vary based upon the type of development. Most development requires water, sewer, electric, roadways, and police and fire protection; however, residential growth also requires park and recreational services, schools, refuse and other public services. Although the City has done generally a good job of getting basic physical infrastructure funded with all types of development,

recouping the ongoing cost of services is more daunting in residential areas than in jobs areas. This disparity is acceptable as long as there is sufficient job growth to offset the cost of services to our neighborhoods. To this end, the City is doing a better job of leveraging city investment and incentives to help create jobs in the Downtown, Rickenbacker, West Edge, and Northland areas. We need to continue this progress. We also need to assure that public schools and other community needs are met.

Pay As We Grow

We also need to broaden our efforts to fund sustainable development in residential areas. This will require new partnership with the private sector, municipal and county leaders, and Columbus Public schools, among others.

Columbus has been blessed with a private sector community that has understood that it has a role in our larger growth issues and has always been willing to engage in dialogue to solve new challenges. These tough times require us to develop new ways of helping assure new neighborhoods are developed in a sustainable manner.

The time has come in our city's history where it is necessary that new neighborhood development better pay for itself and its share of necessary community services. Without such adjustment, our city resources will continue to be stretched thin. Furthermore, Columbus Public Schools, and our other regional school systems, will face similar problems, if neighborhoods develop without regard for their impact on school facilities. Funding new schools must be an essential part of our neighborhood growth policies. Furthermore, it is paramount that the city determines new ways to fund essential police, fire and sanitation services to these areas. Our changing times and needs require a new policy for new neighborhood development--"Pay as We Grow."

Action Step: Establish the costs of development and continued service for job growth and sustainable neighborhood growth efforts, recommend ways to further leverage public and private resources for job growth, and establish a "Pay As We Grow" policy for residential neighborhood growth.

(3) Engaging Partners and Aligning City Government

Finally, we must heighten our engagement with suburban municipalities, surrounding counties, and the public and private sectors on these growth issues to ensure economic prosperity for Columbus and the entire region.

Regional Focus

Historically, the focus on regional cooperation has centered primarily on public infrastructure and transportation issues. There continues to be a great need to improve on these matters; however, for Central Ohio to prosper, we need to broaden our focus on fundamental growth and community issues.

In recent years, we have succeeded in bringing a broader focus to this relationship. For example:

- Our regional collaboration on the EPA 208 plan raised awareness of development matters beyond sewerage infrastructure;
- Our regular dialogue with regional mayors has touched upon national and state issues, development, safety, and homeland security matters;
- Our education summits have addressed regional educational challenges;
- Our economic development agreements with New Albany and Obetz have linked outer edge development with reinvestment in the City's older areas;
- Our Housing Trust efforts have begun to address the issue of affordable housing in our region;
- Our Regional Economic Strategy Targets of Excellence is leveraging efforts of the City, OSU, and the Chamber of Commerce to identify development priorities;
- Our Congestion Summit brought forth significant strategies to manage congestion and,
- Our support of MORPC's regional forum is fostering understanding throughout Central Ohio.
- Our successful merger of our community's two airport authorities into one regional authority.

Not discounting these measures, I believe there needs to be a better appreciation among state and local governments and the private sector regarding regional economic prosperity. For instance, we all will be better positioned for job growth, if all of our jurisdictions focus on creating or attracting new jobs to the region instead of competing with each other to take jobs from each other. Additionally, a look at our region's demographic trends show that the population will continue to become economically, racially, socially, and spiritually diverse. That means that all of our jurisdictions has a responsibility to share in the acceptance of our new residents and assure suitable access to jobs, housing, education, health, safety, and recreational services and other community needs. It also means that we will experience increasing demands on our water supplies and natural resources, requiring evermore vigilance in our stewardship of these resources. In short, just as Columbus must assure that we strike balance between job growth and sustainable neighborhoods, the region must strike a similar balance.

As we work through the many issues raised in this memorandum, we will need to evaluate and align our City policies and operational and capital improvement budgets to meet our goals. This evaluation needs to include community leaders from throughout the region.

In our first term, we've had great success appointing successful task forces, with membership from across our community to produce results. The Housing Trust Fund, Downtown Development Corporation, Regional Airport Authority, EPA 208 Plan, and the Development Services' One Stop Shop are all examples of how we have focused community leaders to solve important development matters.

Action Step: Appoint a task force involving City officials and leaders from our schools, other governmental jurisdictions, regional planning organizations, business and development groups, labor unions, and neighborhood and community service organizations to address job growth and sustainable neighborhood development, identify steps to assure a more balanced regional growth agenda, and align the City's planning, policies, and operations and capital budgets to help leverage cooperation with public and private sector to meet these goals.